

West Virginia 4-H...

Continues the tradition of
“Making the Best Better.”

West Virginia 4-H is a tradition that has encouraged the personal growth of young people for the past 100 years. The start of 4-H in West Virginia began in the early 1900's in communities where groups or clubs met to learn about farming.

West Virginia's first club was called the Corn Club, which was organized by Pickaway School in Monroe County in 1908. The students received 100 grains of tested seed corn from the West Virginia University Extension Department. Forty-six of these students entered their crop in a corn show at the county courthouse in November.

The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 formed the Cooperative Extension System in the United States. County Extension agents and the local leaders began to coordinate 4-H clubs. In Monroe County, the clubs had expanded from corn production to pig, poultry, potatoes and canning clubs. According to county reports, 700 members were participating in the clubs by 1917. These clubs developed into what is known today as the 4-H. The official report forms for the youth phase of agricultural extension programs emerged in 1930.

The emphasis for these new clubs was placed on production agriculture for boys and sewing, baking and canning for girls. The girls' clubs concentrated on helping these young women gain self-confidence and a sense of community responsibility. These ideals were later incorporated into clubs across the nation.